
 DIGEST

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SB 470 Reengrossed

2016 Regular Session

Morrish

Present law provides for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) as a program of merit scholarships for students attending certain postsecondary education institutions who meet specific requirements. Requires the legislature annually to appropriate funds sufficient to cover the costs of TOPS awards.

Present law provides, if the legislature appropriates insufficient money to fund all awards, for reducing the number of students receiving awards pursuant to a procedure adopted by the administering agency; requires that such procedure provide for eliminating students based on ACT score and the ability of families to pay tuition. Proposed law, instead of providing for such elimination, requires the reduction of award amounts on a pro rata basis; also applies this reduction to stipends granted for certain awards. Authorizes public postsecondary education institutions to charge a student the difference between the award amount and tuition amount, unless the student is granted a tuition waiver.

Proposed law provides that a student whose award is reduced pursuant to proposed law shall not be required to accept payment of his award or to enroll or maintain continuous enrollment in an eligible college or university during the time period for which there is a funding shortfall and may defer acceptance of his award benefits. Provides that upon such deferment, the student shall:

- (1) Be eligible, upon enrollment or re-enrollment, to receive all applicable award benefits for any remaining semester or semesters, or the equivalent thereof, of his unused eligibility.
- (2) Meet all academic and other eligibility requirements, except as otherwise provided in proposed law.
- (3) Exhaust all unused award eligibility within five years of his initial reduction unless granted an exception for cause.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 17:5065(D))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Senate Floor Amendments to engrossed bill

1. Allows a student whose award is reduced or eliminated due to insufficient funding to defer acceptance of his award payment and retain the option to later accept and receive his award for all semesters, or equivalent thereof, for which he qualifies to receive his TOPS award.
2. Requires the student to exhaust all such unused award eligibility within five years of the initial reduction/elimination of his award, unless granted an exception for cause; in which case the time period to exhaust unused award eligibility is extended by the amount of time the exception was granted.

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the reengrossed bill:

1. Remove present law that provides, if the legislature appropriates insufficient money to fund all awards, for making students ineligible based on ACT score and the ability of families to pay tuition.
2. Remove proposed law that would have subjected the pro rata reduction of award amounts to the approval of the Jt. Legislative Committee on the Budget.